

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-10

OMB-01 AID-05 /085 W

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O R 311607Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7317

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RABAT 6315

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SS SP MR AG

SUBJECT: SAHARA ROUNDUP

1. SUMMARY: IN ATMOSPHERE OF INCREASING ANXIETY, MOROCCANS CONCERNED THAT ALGIERS WILL MID-WIFE PROVISIONAL SAHARAN GOVERNMENT. MEANWHILE, SPECULATION ABOUT POSSIBLE DOWN-GRADING OF ALGERIAN-MOROCCAN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD, BUT IS DENIED BY ALGERIANS HERE. OULD DADDAH MAKES A SURPRISE VISIT. MOROCCAN EMISSARY'S TRIP TO ALGIERS TIED TO EXPULSIONS OF MOROCCANS, WHICH CONTINUE APACE. MOROCCAN COMMUNIST LEADER FORSEES NO CHANGE IN SOVIET POLICY. END SUMMARY.

2. MOROCCAN ANXIETY RISING: MINISTER OF INFORMATION BENHIMA AT A RECEPTION DEC. 30 EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT
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ALGERIANS ABOUT TO ENGINEER ANNOUNCEMENT OF PROVISIONAL

SAHARAN GOVERNMENT. HE NOTED GOA HAD INVITED JOURNALISTS TO TINDOUF AND THAT ANNOUNCEMENT COULD TAKE PLACE AT PRESS CONFERENCE DEC. 31. BENHIMA COMMENTED TO ONE WESTERN JOURNALIST THAT MOROCCO READY FOR WAR IF ALGERIA REALLY WANTED IT. PPS (COMMUNIST) LEADER ALI YATA VOICED WORRY AT SAME RECEPTION THAT ALGERIANS MIGHT EVEN FORM A PROVISIONAL MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT, MADE UP OF ANTI-REGIME EXILES, WHICH HE SAW AS POTENTIAL POINT OF NO RETURN IN ALGERIAN-MOROCCAN RELATIONS. MEANWHILE, FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED NOT TO LEAVE TOWN DURING HOLIDAY WEEKEND IN ANTICIPATION OF IMPORTANT, BUT UNSPECIFIED, DEVELOPMENTS.

3. CHERKAOUI MISSION TO ALGIERS; EXPLUSIONS: CONCERNING SECRETARY OF STATE CHERKAOUI'S MEETING WITH BOUMEDIENE AND BOUTEFLIKA DEC. 29, SENIOR FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL TOLD US PRIVATELY DEC. 30 THAT CHERKAOUI HAD BEEN SENT TO DISCUSS EXPLUSIONS OF MOROCCANS FROM ALGERIA. THE SOURCE INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT ALGERIAN RESPONSE HAD NOT BEEN ENCOURAGING. ALGERIANS HAD UNDERLINED "SOVEREIGN RIGHT" TO EXPEL ALIENS AND HAD LED MOROCCANS TO BELIEVE THAT EXPULSIONS LIKELY TO CONTINUE.

4. DEPORTATION OF MOROCCANS AND ALGERIAN NASTINESS BEING KEPT IN PUBLIC EYE, WITH LATEST EXPULSION FIGURE OF 30,000 PROMINENTLY FEATURED IN PRESS. SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS EDITORIAL CONDEMNED EXPULSIONS AS UNHEARD OF, UNHUMAN MEASURE CONTRARY TO TRADITION OF ISLAM AND INTERNATIONAL MORALITY. SUGGESTED ALGERIANS TRYING TO CREATE BURDEN FOR GOM, BUT MOROCCO FULLY CAPABLE OF ABSORBING DEPORTEES, NOTABLY IN UNDER-POPULATED SAHARA. EDITORIAL COMMENTED ALGERIANS HAD "LOST THE GAME AND SAHARA HAD ESCAPED THEM." MOROCCO WOULD ALWAYS CONSIDER ALGERIANS HERE AS BROTHERS, HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF IMPORTANCE MOROCCO ATTACHED TO ITS TRADITIONS OF "NOBILITY, DIGNITY AND SPIRITUAL GREATNESS."

5. ALGERIAN CHARGE, QUERIED DEC. 30 ABOUT MOROCCAN PRESS REPORT THAT AN ALGERIAN EMISSARY HAD VISITED MOROCCO FOLLOWING REDA GUEDIRA'S RECENT TRIP TO ALGIERS AND BEFORE CHERKAOUI MISSION, STATED THAT THIS PRESS REPORT WAS FIRST HE HAD HEARD OF ANY ALGERIAN EMISSARY HERE. HE COMMENTED, HOWEVER, CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT GUEDIRA AND CHERKAOUI TRIPS WERE RELATIVELY POSITIVE SIGN, IN THAT CONTACTS AT LEAST CONTINUING DURING THIS DIFFICULT PERIOD IN MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN RELATIONS. TUNISIAN COUNSELOR COMMENTED SAME DAY THAT LITTLE PROGRESS THROUGH DIRECT CONTACTS OR MEDIATION COULD BE EXPECTED AT THIS TIME. IN HIS VIEW, MOROCCANS HAVE ATTEMPTED TO MAINTAIN CONCILIATORY ATMOSPHERE, BUT ALGERIANS TOO "WORKED UP". TUNISIAN PREDICTED IT WOULD TAKE CONSIDERABLE TIME, PERHAPS UNTIL LATE 1976, BEFORE

TWO SIDES COULD REASON TOGETHER.

6. STATUS OF ALGERIAN EMBASSY: WE NOTE BBC REPORT DEC. 30 THAT MOROCCO AND ALGERIA HAVE WITHDRAWN THEIR AMBASSADORS. MINISTER OF INFORMATION BENHIMA AT DEC. 30 RECEPTION SPREAD WORD AMONG JOURNALISTS AND DIPLOMATS THAT ALGERIANS HAD CEASED ACTIVITY AT THEIR EMBASSY AND HAD QUIETLY TAKEN DOWN PLAQUE, ALTHOUGH WITHOUT INFORMING GOM. (RUMOR HAS BEEN CIRCULATING IN PAST FEW DAYS THAT ALGERIANS HAVE CLOSED DOWN THEIR EMBASSY IN RABAT). ALGERIAN CHARGE, HOWEVER, TOLD US DEC. 30 THAT HIS EMBASSY CONDUCTING BUSINESS AS USUAL AND HAD RECEIVED NO INSTRUCTIONS TO WITHDRAW. ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR, WHO ABSENT SINCE DEC. 18, EXPECTED BACK IN RABAT IN EARLY JANUARY, ACCORDING TO ALGERIAN CHARGE. HE CHARACTERIZED RUMOR OF HIS EMBASSY'S CLOSING AS "WISHING THINKING" ON PART OF THOSE WHO HOPED FOR DISRUPTION IN RELATIONS.

7. OULD DADDAH ARRIVES: OULD DADDAH ARRIVED IN RABAT AT NOON DEC. 31 ON SURPRISE VISIT IN COMPANY OF OULD MOUKNASS AND OTHER OFFICIALS. THEY WERE GREETED BY KING HASSAN, PRINCE OSMAN AND, SOMEWHAT UNUSUALLY, ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF AND ROYAL GUARD COMMANDER. MEANWHILE, PRESS HAS FOLLOWED OTHER DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY CLOSELY, ALTHOUGH UNABLE TO SUPPLY MUCH BY WAY OF SUBSTANCE. WHILE NOTING OULD MOUKNASS' SECOND VOYAGE TO TRIPOLI, SEMI-OFFICIAL MEDIA HAVE IGNORED QADHAFI-BOUMEDIENE MEETING. COMMUNIQUE (ALGIERS 3780) OBVIOUSLY CAUSE OF DISCOMFORT IN RABAT AND SUGGESTS MOROCCANS AND MAURITANIANS MAY HAVE LOST CONSIDERABLE GROUND IN CONTEST OVER QADHAFI'S SYMPATHIES. TUNISIAN COUNSELOR HERE, HOWEVER, OFFERED OPINION THAT QADHAFI'S SUPPORT STOPPED SHORT OF ALGERIAN DESIRES.

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-10

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O R 311607Z DEC 75
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7318
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 RABAT 6315

8. SOVIET SUPPORT OF ALGERIA: PPS (COMMUNIST) LEADER
ALI YATA COMMENTED PRIVATELY DEC. 30 THAT HE SAW LITTLE
HOPE THAT USSR WOULD MODERATE ITS CURRENT PRO-ALGERIAN STANCE
TO BECOME MORE NEUTRAL ON SAHARA DISPUTE. HE PREDICTED
THAT IF TENSIONS GOT OUT OF HAND BETWEEN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA,
SOVIETS AND OTHER "PROGRESSIVE" STATES WOULD BE LIKELY TO
HEW TO ALGERIAN SIDE OF CASE. HE REPEATED HIS VIEW THAT
ALGERIAN LEVERAGE OVER SOVIETS REMAINED CONSIDERABLE IN
LIGHT OF SOVIET AIRLIFT TO ANGOLA VIA ALGERIA.

9. HEARTS AND MINDS: LATEST ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT
WAS DISPATCH OF FOUR SECRETARIES OF STATE TO EL AYOUN AND SMARA,
TO HIGHLIGHT THE INAUGURATION OF "NUMEROUS ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL PROJECTS." MILITARY ACTIVITY NOWHERE IN PRESS.

10. COMMENT: WHILE INFOR MIN BENHIMA HAS REPUTATION FOR
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OCCASIONAL EXCITABILITY, HIS CONCERN OVER POSSIBILITY OF
ALGERIAN ENGINEERING OF SAHARAN PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT SEEMS
TO BE WIDELY SHARED IN GOM/ THE OPPOSITION PRESS HAS
CONTRIBUTED TO THE ATMOSPHERE OF RISING CONCERN. CITING
FRENCH PRESS REPORTS, IT SURFACED PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT
AS AN IMMINENT POSSIBILITY "WHICH WOULD ALLOW ALGERIA TO
INTERVENE DIRECTLY AGAINST MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA." FORMATION
OF SUCH A GOVERNMENT COULD BE EXPECTED TO EXACERBATE ALGERIAN-
MOROCCAN TENSIONS SIGNIFICANTLY. AS FOR ALI YATA'S FEARS
THAT GOA MIGHT FORM MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT IN EXILE, THIS,
IF IT HAPPENED, WOULD PRESUMABLY REFLECT ALGERIAN DECISION TO
GO TO BRINK. ALGERIAN DIPLOMATS HERE APPEAR TO BE TRYING TO
PROJECT IMAGE OF RELATIVE TRANQUILITY AND BUSINESS AS USUAL,
ALTHOUGH THEIR INFLUENCE APPARENTLY NOT GREAT ON LOCAL PERCEPTIONS.
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